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WASHINGTON LETTER.

WASHINGTON, December 29, 1894.

NEW GEOGRAPHY.—Outside of parties immediately interested in the sealing industry, the Commander Islands, off Kamchatka, are almost unknown. Commander Z. L. Tanner in his Report upon the investigations of the steamer *Albatross* in 1892 (just published) makes some interesting statements based on personal observations.

The group consists of two principal islands, Bering and Copper, with numerous outlying rocks and islets. Both islands (50 and 30 miles respectively) have a central mountain range upwards of 2,000 feet in height. The islands lie northwest and southeast; have a breadth of from 2 to 17 miles, and a climate not severe, on account of the benign influence of the Japan stream. Nutritive grasses grow on Bering Island, and the natives cultivate hardy vegetables. The population of both islands is less than 700 and is concentrated at two points,—Nikolski and Preobrajenski. They are housed in comfortable wooden cottages, and have a Greek church. The government is vested in a Governor, appointed by the Russian authorities. A native chief and second chief are elected by vote, subject to the governor and agent. Every member of the community has certain duties to perform, and the pay for all work is turned into a common fund which is divided *per capita*, a certain amount being withheld for the support

of the church. Transportation is by dog sleds, which in winter can easily travel 25 miles a day. Reindeer from Siberia have been turned loose on the islands; besides which the natives have small herds of cattle.

Captain Tanner touched also at the volcanic Bogoslof Island, and noted many changes since the visit of one year previous. New Bogoslof was still active, but was at least 100 feet lower and otherwise changed in outline. The old and new volcanoes, about a mile apart, were connected a year ago by a narrow isthmus a little above the level of the sea. Now there is an open passage several hundred feet in width; the remainder of the spit having been bodily moved to the westward with a broad sweep.

The scientific investigations of this cruise of the *Albatross* were confined largely to collecting information pertaining to the natural history of the fur seal, yet by taking advantage of the occasional days when the regular work could not be carried on, the naturalists on board were able to make considerable collections.

GEOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTION OF ANIMALS AND PLANTS.—Dr. C. Hart Merriam has been for several years engaged in an investigation of the laws of thermal control that regulate the distribution of animals and plants. Since the enlargement of the scope of the investigation authorized by Congress in 1890, the work has been pressed with increased vigor and on a scale never before attempted. The aim from the first has been to obtain accurate and complete data for mapping the distribution of individual species, and by combining these maps, and by independent field work, to ascertain the bound-

aries of the natural life zones of the country, at the same time securing data and specimens illustrating the distribution and status of the various species. An area of about 12,000 square miles in northern Arizona was mapped in 1889; about 20,000 square miles in Idaho in 1890; in 1891 the Death Valley expedition was engaged in similar work and covered about 100,000 square miles between the Colorado River and the Pacific Ocean. Since then the biological survey of the Rocky Mountain region has been carried from Utah and Idaho completely across Wyoming. A large part of Wyoming was found to be from 1,000 to 3,000 feet lower than represented on the latest maps, and consequently to have a warmer summer climate and to belong to a more southern life zone than previously supposed. The regions thus investigated include the highest and lowest portions of the United States, namely, Mount Whitney, in the Sierras, some 15,000 feet above sea-level, and Death Valley, 500 feet below sea-level.

Dr. Merriam was the first to point out that the territory of the United States may be divided into a definite number of belts or zones, each characterized by the presence of certain native animals and plants, and which under cultivation is fitted for particular agricultural products. The reason, says Dr. Merriam,* why certain animals and plants are restricted to particular areas or belts, where no visible barriers exist to prevent dispersion, is that the sensitive organizations of such species have become adapted to the particular physical and climatic conditions there prevalent, and are not sufficiently plastic to enable them to live under other

* Annual Report of the Secretary of Agriculture, 1893, p. 228.

conditions. What is true of animals and plants in a state of nature is true also of animals and plants as modified by man ; for every race or breed of sheep, cattle or swine, and every variety of grain, vegetable or fruit, thrives best under particular conditions of temperature, moisture and exposure.

When the courses of these bio-geographic zones are traced across the continent, and their boundaries shown in different colors on large scale maps, the agriculturist will have a key to the crops most likely to succeed in his location, for the fauna and flora of a region may be made to serve as a reliable index to its agricultural capabilities. In the late annual report of the Secretary of Agriculture Dr. Merriam has delineated a colored map which he terms "Third provisional bio-geographic map of North America, showing the principal life areas."

RESULTS OF PRIMARY TRIANGULATIONS.—Mr. Henry Gannett has in form for publication the results of primary triangulation executed by the Geological Survey since the commencement of work upon the topographic atlas of the United States. He says that the triangulation of the survey is executed solely for the primary control of topographic work upon scales not exceeding 1:62,500, or very nearly one mile to an inch. Wherever work has been done by other organizations, which is of sufficient accuracy for the control of the maps of the Geological Survey, such work has been utilized both immediately for the location of topographic work and also for the extension of triangulation therefrom by the Survey. For instance, the maps in New England, New

York, New Jersey and Pennsylvania rest in large part directly upon the points determined by the Coast and Geodetic Survey, while in the Appalachian region triangulation has been *extended* by the Geological Survey from points determined by the Coast Survey. The work of the U. S. Lake Survey, and also that of the New York State Survey has been extensively utilized in a similar manner.

The results of these triangulations have been arranged in chapters by geographical groups, the arrangement being as natural as possible. These groups are as follows: New England; New York, New Jersey and Pennsylvania; South Appalachian region; Michigan; Arkansas; Kansas; Texas; Black Hills of South Dakota; Aspen, Colo.; Wyoming; Montana; Idaho; California; and the plateau region of New Mexico and Arizona. Confining further remarks to triangulation in New England, New York, New Jersey and Pennsylvania, it may be said that the Coast and Geodetic Survey covers the entire coast of Maine, and extends far inland. It covers most of New Hampshire and much of Vermont. The entire areas of the remaining States of this group are practically covered by its primary stations, but much work of a supplementary character was found necessary by the Geological Survey. In New York the Coast Survey triangulation extends from New York Harbor up the Hudson and through Lake Champlain, and up the Mohawk Valley to a connection with the U. S. Lake Survey near Oswego. The New York State (Gardner) Survey, starting from points near the Hudson, has been extended westward to the foot of Lake Erie, and southward across the middle of the State to

the Pennsylvania line. The work of the Coast Survey extends over a large part of Eastern Pennsylvania, while the entire area of New Jersey has been closely covered by the Coast Survey and New Jersey Geological Survey triangulations. Both in New York and Pennsylvania much supplementary triangulation was found necessary, both for the purpose of supplying more points in areas already covered by triangulation and in the extension into new areas.

It is worth remarking in passing that of the triangulation executed by early surveys in the West, known as the Hayden, Powell and Wheeler surveys, the Wheeler work has been utilized but little, the Hayden to a greater extent, the Powell survey very largely.

Triangulation being an absolute requisite, or basis of every extensive topographic survey, this work of Mr. Gannett's asserts its usefulness in the projection of great railroad lines, systems of irrigation, water works, etc.

Mr. Gannett's *Manual of Topographic Methods*, published a few months ago, has been in greater demand than any other publication of the Geological Survey. The entire edition is nearly exhausted—a very large proportion of it by sale.

The Legislature of New York having failed at its last session to make provision to continue the topographic survey of the State in conjunction with the U. S. Geological Survey, but little has been accomplished there during 1894. With a small balance of appropriation from 1893 five additional sheets of maps have been issued. Twenty-five sheets were issued the previous year. An appropriation for the "Colvin"

survey was vetoed by Gov. Flower, and perhaps wisely. If the State of New York is to continue and complete the topographic survey and map of the State in conjunction with the U. S. Survey, as has been done with so much credit by Massachusetts, Connecticut and New Jersey, it is at least proper that all disjointed efforts should be discouraged, and the opportunity should not be slighted of having the entire work done in the most thorough manner, and at greatly reduced expense.

BUREAU OF AMERICAN REPUBLICS. — It has been assumed that the omission in the estimates of the Department of State of the annual appropriation for the Bureau of American Republics was an unfriendly act of the Department, or an indication on the part of this Administration to permit the Bureau to drop out of existence. But while Congress at the last session reduced the appropriation to the Bureau to a point that crippled its usefulness, such an assumption overlooks the fact that the Bureau was created under an international agreement with the Republics of South America, to last until the year 1900. The Comptroller of the Treasury recently affirmed the international character of the Bureau, thus giving it a broader foundation, and determining the fact that it is not a branch of the Department of State, but a separate Bureau under the supervision of the Secretary of State, and hence it was not thought proper to include it in the regular department estimates. Senator Hale has introduced a bill providing for an appropriation of \$30,000 per annum.

Last summer, when the director found himself in-

vested with very small means to carry on the operations of his Bureau, he conceived the wise plan of inviting advertisements for insertion in the various publications of the Bureau, which have wide circulation among business houses in both Americas. The plan was being worked very successfully, when the Secretary of State interposed, and all contracts were cancelled forthwith. Since then the operations of the Bureau have been quite at a standstill. One scarcely perceives the difference between selling the publications of the Bureau and selling advertising spaces in its publications. The "press" all over the country jeered and howled, because one branch of the Government proposed to do business precisely as a well-conducted business house would. Every line of the *U. S. Official Postal Guide* is furnished by the Post Office Department, and the Postmaster-General certifies on the outside cover that the *Guide* is "the only Official Bulletin of the Post Office Department," and yet this official publication is sandwiched between 150 pages of profitable advertisements.

The Secretary of State has concluded, however, that while the international agreement with the republics of South America has not the binding force of a treaty made by the President, by and with the advice and consent of the Senate, it has the sanction of the President and of both Houses of Congress, and that as long as a majority of the Governments that became parties to the Union, at the instance of the United States, adhere to it by contributing to its support, this Government cannot in good faith withdraw from the organization.

WESTERN SIBERIA.—Consul-General Charles Jonas, in the December issue of the U. S. Consular Reports, makes some interesting statements regarding the recent rapid development of the vast region called Western Siberia. Although this region forms less than one-fifth of all Siberia, it contains fully two-thirds of its inhabitants, but so thinly populated as to contain on an average only three persons to the square mile. It is estimated that over 18,000 emigrants settled in Western Siberia last summer. The western section of the Siberian Railroad, a distance of about 500 miles, has just been finished. The passenger service is exceedingly limited, trains being dispatched from Omsk twice a week. The distance between stations is 26 miles, and the fare about 24 cents between two stations. The fare from Cheliabinsk to Omsk—495 miles—is \$5.40, but the running time of the whole line is two days and four hours. With the completion of this western section there is now an unbroken line of railroad from St. Petersburg to Omsk, a distance of 2,128 miles, which may be travelled in four and a half days. Though the track crosses the Ural Mountains, the whole mountain section of 200 miles has been constructed without tunnels, and, *mirabile dictu*, at a cost of about \$7,000 less per mile than the estimates. An effort will be made next year to extend the track as far as Krasnoyarsk, on the Upper Yenisei, 3,528 miles from St. Petersburg, exceeding about 300 miles the shortest railroad track from New York to San Francisco.

This great railway development through a region of

cheap and fertile land, and cheap farm labor, will affect the markets of the world in the near future.

WASHINGTON'S CONVENTION WEEK.—The American Jewish Historical Society—an organization running on lines parallel with those of the Anglo-Jewish Society—commenced its third annual meeting in this city December 26th. The membership of this Society is mostly in Philadelphia, New York and the Southern States. Among those present were : Oscar S. Straus, Prof. Richard Gottheil, Rev. Dr. G. Gottheil and Mr. Barnet Phillips, of New York ; Dr. Herbert Friedenwald and Henry S. Marias, of Philadelphia ; Dr. Cyrus Adler, of Washington ; Mendes Cohen and Meyer Cohen, of Baltimore, and Prof. M. Jastrow.

The object of the Society is to collect and publish material bearing upon the history of the Jews in America. It is not sectarian, but merely specializes a section of American history. The Jews in Spain and Portugal participated in some degree in the voyages which led to the discovery of America, and there were Jews from Holland, Great Britain and Jamaica among the earliest settlers. There were Jews in the Continental Army, and others contributed liberally to defray the expenses of the Revolutionary War.

The following named interesting papers, among others, were submitted for publication :

“Addresses of the Jews of the United States to Washington and his Replies Thereto,” and “The Statue of Thomas Jefferson in the Capitol,” Lewis Abrahams of Washington ; “Some Notes on the Jews in Texas,” Rev. Henry Cohen, Galveston, Texas ;

"First Chapters of New York Jewish History," Albion M. Dyer, New York; "The Jews of Richmond," Jacob Ezekiel, Cincinnati, Ohio; "Notes on the Jews in Louisiana," Prof. R. Gottheil, New York; "Notes on the Jews of Jamaica," and "A Prayer Delivered in the Synagogue in New York, 1760," Dr. Herbert Friedenwald, Philadelphia; "A Few Extracts from the Life and Revolutionary Services of Col. Isaac Franks," George W. Hufnogle, New Hope, Pa.; "The Earliest Rabbis and Jewish Authors in America," Dr. M. Kays-erling, Budapest, Hungary; "Phases of Jewish Life in New York before 1800," and "Incidents Illustrative of American Jewish Patriotism," Max J. Kohler, New York; "Some Notes on the Jews of Georgia and South Carolina," "Isaac de Castro Tortas and Joseph Antonio de Silva—two South American Martyrs," "A Contribution to the History of the Jews in Jamaica and Barbadoes," "Early Jewish Literature in America—an Attempt at a Bibliography," George A. Kohut, New York; "The Levy and Seixas Families of Newport and New York," N. Taylor Phillips, New York; "The American Jewish Soldier," Simon Wolf, Washington, D. C.

The American Historical Association commenced its tenth annual meeting in this city December 26th. Mr. Justin Winsor presided in the absence of Mr. Henry Adams. A letter from President Adams was read, in which he alluded to his earnest desire to get the Association together on a new basis, and went on to speak of the possibility of the establishment of history as a fixed science.

Mr. Rossiter Johnson, of New York, read a paper of

unusual interest on the turning points in the American civil war. He said that he believed that in the highest sense there was no such turning point ; that the struggle must in any case have ended in the preservation of the Union ; but that there were certain secondary turning points that determined the nature and duration of the conflict. These he named as follows : First, Kentucky's refusal to secede, which deprived the Confederates of the natural line of defense along the Ohio River ; second, the battle of Bull Run, which confirmed the Southern people in their belief in their superior prowess and certainty of success ; third, the Emancipation Proclamation, which placed the struggle on its true issue ; fourth, the battle of Gettysburg, which ended any hope of carrying the war into the North ; fifth, the re-election of President Lincoln, which decided that there should be no cessation of hostilities till the Confederacy ceased to exist. Had all these causes failed except the last, Dr. Johnson said the good judgment of the American people would have still so emphatically expressed itself that the great rebellion could not have ended otherwise than it did.

A paper read by Mrs. Lee C. Harby, of New York, proved to be the only connected narrative which has been written on the habits, government and superstitions of the Tejas Indians, who formerly inhabited an enormous extent of territory covering nearly all of that vast stretch of country which is now called Texas, and who possessed the distinguishing excellence of having been always friendly to the white man.

Prof. George Parker Winship, of Harvard, told the Association why Coronado led the Spanish expedition to New Mexico in 1540.

Mr. Bernard Moses, of the University of California, gave an account of the Spanish office of colonial administration during the time when the Spanish holdings in America required special care at the seat of the Home Government. He called this establishment the "India Office" of Spain, and described its vast system of accounts, inspection and finance, and its downfall.

Prof. J. S. Bassett, of Trinity College, read a paper based on new points found in the recently published colonial records of North Carolina concerning the Regulators of North Carolina in 1766-71. He claimed that the regulators' was only a peasants' rising, and not an attempted revolution, and that it was due to economic and political rather than to religious causes.

Dr. Edward Friedenwald, of Philadelphia, contributed a paper on the Continental Congress which he justly termed "a neglected portion of American Revolutionary history." That Congress, he said, arouses unique interest in American history as the dictating head of the great war that was to establish the United States among the nations of the world. It combined all the functions of a legislative, executive and judicial body, and exercised them at various times.

Three papers on Rhode Island history were given in turn, beginning with one by Prof. H. D. Hazeltine, of Brown University, on "Appeals from Rhode Island Courts to the King in Council." Prof. F. G. Bates, of Cornell, followed with an explanation of the opposition of Rhode Island to the impost duty of 1781; and lastly, Prof. A. M. Mowry, of Harvard, gave some new light on the constitutional controversy in Rhode Island in 1841.

Pennsylvania came in for two discourses by Prof. S. B. Harding, of Harvard, and S. M. Sener, of Lancaster, respectively. The former wrote on "Party struggles over the Pennsylvania Constitution, 1775-1790," and the latter on "The language, manners and history of the Pennsylvania Germans." Both these papers were exceedingly interesting.

The last discourse before the Association was on the question, "What has the United States done for history?" which was partially answered by Mr. A. Howard Clarke.

Hon. George F. Hoar, of Massachusetts, was elected president for the coming year.

The American Folk-Lore Society began its sixth annual session in Washington, December 27th. It has a membership of five hundred, bristling with enthusiasts in this interesting line of study. It publishes the *Journal of American Folk-Lore*, and has produced two volumes of *Memoirs*. There are several local branches of the Society in different parts of the country.

There were present on this occasion, Dr. Washington Matthews, U. S. A.; W. W. Newell, and M. H. Saville, of Cambridge; Capt. J. G. Bourke, U. S. A.; Dr. H. Carrington Bolton, Major Powell, Prof. O. T. Mason, J. O. Dorsey and F. H. Cushing, D. G. Brinton, F. W. Putnam and others. Dr. Matthews read a paper on "A Navahoe Myth," Mr. Cushing one on "Folk-Lore Concepts," Mr. Newell one on "Theories of the diffusion of Folk Tales," Dr. Fewkes gave "Illustrations of the Cortes Codex," and Capt. Moten, "Negro Corn Songs." At an evening session Indian songs were reproduced from a phonograph, the songs

having been procured by Dr. Matthews, folk-lore songs by Mr. Cushing, Indian songs by Alice Fletcher and Mr. Laflesche, the latter a member of the Omaha tribe of Indians. Papers at following sessions were read by Zelia Nuttall, Stewart Culin, Mrs. F. D. Bergen, Dr. G. A. Dorsey, Miss Helen Douglas, Dr. Thomas Wilson and H. H. Kidder.

The American Society of Church History, organized in 1888, convened here in annual session, December 27th. Bishop Hurst, the President of the Society, gave a review of the progress of Church History in Germany, France, Great Britain and the United States. He called attention to the fact that of the important series of the Histories of the Church in the United States ordered by the Society four years ago, seven of the thirteen volumes have already appeared and received recognition in this country and in Europe. Prof. George P. Fisher read an essay on Philip Schaff. The meetings of the Society were largely occupied in informal discussion of the literature of church history.

The American Forestry Association, having for its object the preservation of the forests of the country, convened its thirteenth annual meeting in this city, December 28th.

OBITUARY.—The late Garrick Mallery, U. S. A., was in the foremost rank among ethnologists. His researches into the history, manners and literature of the American aborigines were exhaustive, and gave him a prominent name in the scientific world. His active interest in this field of research seems to date

from about the year 1876, when, having been assigned to the first United States Infantry, he was ordered to Fort Rice, Dakota Territory. Here he made investigations, under favorable conditions, into the sign language, pictographs and mythologies of the North American Indians. The results of these researches gave him great distinction as an original investigator; and having been retired from the army in 1879 for disabilities incurred in the line of duty, he accepted the appointment of Ethnologist in the Bureau of Ethnology.

Colonel Mallery was a direct descendant from Peter Mallery, who arrived in Boston from England in 1638. Several of his ancestors were military officers in the colonial service and in the Revolutionary war. Through his mother he was descended from John Harris, founder of Harrisburg, and William Maclay, first U. S. Senator from Pennsylvania. He was a graduate of Yale, and received the degree of LL.D. from the University of Pennsylvania. He was in active army service from 1861 to 1864, and at one time was acting Governor of Virginia. He was founder of the Anthropological Society; vice-president of the American Association for the Advancement of Science; president of the joint commission of the five scientific societies of Washington; founder and president of the local Yale Alumni Association; and formerly president of the Philosophical Society and of the Literary Society, and of the Cosmos Club of Washington. Through his eminent services in the late war, through his contributions to literature, and especially to a better understanding of the life and manners of the Indians of North America.

through his interest and active participation in projects requiring faithful duty, eminent ability and the confidence of his associates he accomplished much for the advantage of mankind.

His published writings are: (1) The former and present number of our Indians, 1877. (2) A calendar of the Dakota Nation, 1877. (3) Some common errors respecting the North American Indians, 1878. (4) The sign-language of the North American Indians, 1880. (5) A collection of gesture-signs and signals of North American Indians, with some comparisons, 1880. (6) Introduction to the study of sign-language among the North American Indians as illustrating the gesture speech of mankind, 1880. (7) Sign language among North American Indians compared with that among other peoples and deaf and dumb mutes, 1881. (8) The gesture speech of man, 1881. (9) The sign-language of the Indians of the upper Missouri in 1832, 1883. (10) Pictographs of the North American Indians, 1886. (11) Manners and meals, 1888. (12.) Philosophy and specialties, 1888. (13) Israelite and Indian, 1889. (14) Social history of the races of mankind, by A. Featherman (a review), 1889. (15) Customs of courtesy, 1890. (16) The fight with the giant witch, 1890. (17) A German edition of Israelite and Indian, printed in Leipzig, 1891. (18) Greeting by gesture, 1891. (19) A philosophical phantasy (Poem), 1893. (20) Picture writing among American Indians, 1893. (21) Spurious symbolism. (22) His last bachelor trip (Poem). There is also an unfinished work which will be published by the Bureau of Ethnology.

H.